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## ***U.S. Reported Denying Immunity To Ex-Partner of Spy Ring Suspect***

By PHILIP SHENON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 15 — Prosecutors have refused to grant immunity to the former business partner of a man accused of being part of a naval espionage ring and have called off her appearance before a Federal grand jury, according to a source close to the investigation.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation had previously told the business partner, Laurie Robinson, that she was a suspect in the case involving the man, John A. Walker Jr., according to her lawyer.

Her appearance before the grand jury, which is meeting in San Francisco, had been scheduled for Tuesday but was canceled last Friday after prosecutors refused her request for immunity, the source said.

According to law-enforcement officials, the grand jury is attempting to find out what happened to hundreds of thousands of dollars that the Government contends was paid to a spy ring working for the Soviet Union.

Prosecutors said that the espionage operation was run by Mr. Walker, a retired Navy communications officer. Mr. Walker, his son, a brother and a California man described as his closest friend have been arrested in the case. All have served in the Navy. All pleaded not guilty.

The source said that Mrs. Robinson's lawyer, John W. Drescher, told the

prosecutors that she would appear before the grand jury but would not answer questions unless she was granted immunity.

Without immunity, the source said, Mrs. Robinson plans to respond to the questions by invoking her Fifth Amendment guarantee against self-incrimination. Hearing that, the prosecutors called off the scheduled testimony since it would be of limited use, the source said.

Mrs. Robinson was Mr. Walker's partner in a private detective agency in Norfolk, Va., Confidential Reports Inc. After his arrest in May, she bought his share of the business.

In a telephone interview, Mrs. Robinson confirmed that the grand jury appearance had been canceled. But she declined to give the reasons why.

"It was basically an agreement between the United States Attorney and my attorney," she said, refusing to elaborate.

Previously, Mrs. Robinson had said she might have been an unwitting courier for Mr. Walker. She has denied any knowledge of espionage activities by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Drescher, her lawyer, did not return repeated telephone calls today seeking comment. The United States Attorney's office in San Francisco refused comment, citing grand jury secrecy requirements.